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**Your All Important
Offline Advertising Options**

Plan To Succeed Online

Take The Guess Work Out of Starting & Building a Successful Business Online!

*"The most rewarding things you do in life are often the ones that look like they cannot be done."
Arnold Palmer*

Offline Advertising Options

Newspapers & Magazines

Advertising is an investment in your business's future. And like any investment, it's important to find out as much as you can before you make a decision.

Much - far too much - has been written about the various methods of promoting your business online, but when it comes to offline advertising, a lot of people really don't know what they want, where to get it or what to do with it after they have it.

Offline Advertising Media

This section will hopefully help clarify your choices when it comes to using off-line advertising media. We'll discuss which methods are best suited to convey your message most effectively, which will give you the exposure you need at a cost you can afford and identify ways to make your offline advertising more cost efficient.

If you want to build a successful business, it's important to promote it offline, in the real world, as well as online, in the virtual world. Although their numbers are dwindling, there are still millions of people around the world who aren't online. Two simple and FREE ways you might begin to promote your business offline include:

1. Putting your name, your company name, your Website URL, e-mail address, autoresponder address and headline or promotional hook on everything piece of paper that leaves your home or office; this includes business cards, stationery, envelopes, sales brochures, flyers, invoices and anything else you can think of.

2. Just like online, writing and submitting articles and press releases is an excellent way to get free publicity. Some good online resources for off-line press information include:

- [Standard Rate and Data Services \(SRDS\)](#)
- [GebbiePress](#)
- [Automated Press Releases](#)
- [Direct Contact Publishing](#)

For lots more information on this important form of publicity, see our section on [Press Releases](#).

Okay, now let's move on to the paid alternatives. Every advertising medium has characteristics that give it natural advantages and limitations. Some questions you should consider before buying ads are: What media is the best to use? How important is creativity? And, is there a way to buy space and time that will stretch my advertising budget? I'll try to answer each of these as we move through the various options.

The offline advertising options we'll discuss are:

- [Newspaper Advertising](#)
- [Magazine Advertising](#)
- [Radio Advertising](#)
- [Television Advertising](#)
- [Direct "Snail" Mail](#)
- [Yellow Pages](#)
- [Outdoor Advertising](#)

Newspaper Advertising

The old standard - classified advertising - still generates a good, solid response. As you look through the newspapers you subscribe to, you'll notice some businesses that advertise regularly. Observe who they are and how they advertise their products and services. More than likely, their advertising formula is working if it's being repeated on a weekly basis!

Some advantages of newspaper advertising:

=> Almost every home receives a newspaper, either by newsstand or home delivery. Reading the newspaper is a habit for most families. And, there is something for everybody: sports, comics, crosswords, news, classifieds, etc. You can reach certain types of people by placing your ad in different sections of the paper. People expect advertising in the newspaper. In fact, many people buy the paper just to read the classifieds!

=> Another advantage is the large variety of ad sizes newspaper advertising offers. If you can afford it, you can attract a lot of attention with a large, well-placed ad. Unlike advertising on TV and radio, newspaper ads can be examined at leisure, so there is virtually no limit to the amount of sales copy you can include. If you're more budget-conscious, try a two-line classified with a bold, knock-out headline. If you've targeted your readership appropriately and have chosen the right category, you can achieve very good results.

Some disadvantages of newspaper advertising:

=> Newspapers usually are read once and stay in the house for just a day.

=> The print quality of newspapers isn't always the best, especially for photographs. So use simple artwork and line drawings for best results.

=> Your ad has to compete with other ads for the reader's attention, so it's crucially important that you create a headline that stands out from the crowd.

=> You're not assured that every person who gets the newspaper will read your ad. They may not read the section you advertised in, or they may simply have skipped the page because there wasn't any interesting news on it.

Buying Newspaper Advertising Space

Newspaper publishers generally charge a flat fee for ads based on word count (classifieds) or line rate. For longer copy advertising is sold by column and inch. You can determine the size ad you want just by looking in the newspaper in which you want to advertise.

If you don't have a large advertising budget, concentrate on lots of smaller, local papers, rather than going with the "big guns." Not only will your ad be more visible, with less competition, but you'll save yourself a bundle of money. Most local weeklies only charge \$10 to \$20 to post your line ad, whereas posting in major publications can cost upwards of \$100 per line.

Often you can get a better rate the longer you agree to let your ad run. So if you have an ad that's a proven seller (based on your online testing), it's best to let it run for three or more weeks at a time. Also, some papers that are delivered twice daily (morning/evening) offer "combination" rates or discounts for advertising in both papers. Take them up on it. Not only can you reach more readers but, as we know, it often takes multiple exposures to your ad to get people to act on it!

Some other factors to consider:

- Newspaper circulation drops on Saturdays and increases on Sundays, which is also the day a newspaper is read most thoroughly.
- Listing category and position are vitally important. You want to make sure that you are addressing your ads to as targeted an audience as possible, so specify in what section you want your ad to appear. Sometimes there's a surcharge for exact position... but don't be afraid to pay for it if you need it. (With the smaller papers you can ask how many other ads will be listed in your category on a particular week. The fewer, the better.)
- Create short, descriptive copy for your ad. Be sure to include your company name and logo (if you have one), your website URL, email address and telephone number. Include prices if applicable.

Magazine Advertising

Many of the same "print" type principles which apply to newspaper advertising also apply to magazine advertising. The biggest differences are:

- Magazines are usually weekly or monthly publications instead of daily.
- Advertising messages are more image-oriented, involve color and the quality of the pictures and paper are superior to newsprint.
- The general rule that you can run the same ad 3-5 times within a campaign period before its appeal lessens applies to magazine advertising as well, even with a monthly publication. So it makes sense to spend extra time and money to prepare a worthwhile ad that can be successfully repeated.

Because ads in magazines are not immediate, they take more planning. Often, an ad for a monthly magazine must be prepared at least a month in advance of publication, so ads detailing prices and items have to be carefully crafted to insure accuracy.

Since the quality of the magazines are superior, the advertising that you generate must be superior as well. Negatives are usually required instead of prints or "PMTs" (photo-mechanical transfers). Consider getting assistance from a graphic artist or an advertising agency.

There are two categories of magazines: trade magazines and consumer magazines. Trade magazines are publications that go to certain types of businesses, services and industries. Consumer magazines are generally the kind you find on the average news stand. Investigate which type would do your business the most good.

An agency can also purchase the magazine space for you, often at no charge, because the magazine pays the agency a commission directly. If you wish to purchase the advertising yourself, contact the magazine directly and ask for an "Ad Kit" or "Media Package." They will send you a folder that includes demographic information, reach information, a current rate card and a sample of the publication.

Although most magazines are national in nature, many have regional advertising sections that allow your business to look like it purchased a national ad when it only went to a certain geographical area. This can be especially useful if your product or service is regional in nature. Some sophisticated magazines even have demographic editions available, which might also be advantageous.

Radio Advertising

Since its inception, radio has become an integral part of our culture. In some way, it touches the lives of almost everyone, every day. As an advertising medium, radio offers a relatively inexpensive way of reaching a lot of people. It has often been called the "theater of the mind" because voices or sounds can be used to create moods or images that if created by visual effects would be impossible to afford.

Advantages to radio advertising include:

=> Radio is a personal advertising medium. Station personalities have a good rapport with their listeners. If a radio personality announces your commercial, it's almost an implied endorsement. Also, radio scripts can be easily changed and updated - even on the spur of the moment.

=> Radio is also a way to support your printed advertising. You can say in your commercial, "See our ad in the Sunday Times," which makes your message twice as effective.

Some limitations to radio advertising:

=> You can't review a radio commercial. Once it plays, it's gone. If you didn't catch all the message, you can't go back and hear it again.

=> Since there are a lot of radio stations, the total listening audience for any one station is just a piece of a much larger pie. That's why it's important to know what stations your customers and prospects probably listen to.

=> People don't listen to the radio all the time... only during certain times of day. So, it's important to know when your customers or prospects are listening. One of the most popular times to reach people is during Drive Times (from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.) It's called that because most people are going to or from work during this period, and because most people listen to their radio when they drive. Unfortunately, radio stations know that this is a favorite time to advertise, so commercial costs are much higher during this time.

=> Radio as a broadcasting medium, can effectively sell an image... or one or two ideas at the most. It is not, however, a detailed medium... and is a poor place for prices and telephone numbers.

=> Radio listeners increase in the spring and summer, contrary to television audiences which increase in the fall and winter and decrease in the summer.

How To Buy Time on the Radio

Do your research. Ask each station that you're interested in for information - the type of programming, musical format, geographic reach, number of listeners and station ratings.

By getting the station ratings and the number of people it reaches, you can figure out the cost-per-thousand people (CPM) by simply dividing the cost of a commercial by the thousands of people you are reaching.

Example: Cost of commercial = \$35.00, Audience reached = 45,000 people.

Cost of commercial per 1000 people = $35/45 = \$0.78$ per 1000

You can also negotiate rates for your commercials, or even barter. Stations are often looking for prizes they can give away to listeners, so it's possible to get full commercial credit for the product or service you offer.

Without getting complicated, here are two cardinal rules for radio advertising:

1. It's better to advertise when people are listening than when they are not.
2. It's better to bunch your commercials together than to spread them apart.

A lot of radio sales reps will try to offer you a reduced rate called TAP (Total Audience Plan) that splits your advertising time into 1/3 drive, 1/3 mid-day and 1/3 night. This may sound like a good deal, but airing commercials during times when your audience isn't listening is bad advertising.

Frequency is a vital element for effective radio advertising. Since listeners can't automatically recall a radio commercial and hear it again, they generally have to hear the same commercial two, four, or maybe six times before the message sinks in - or before they get all the information they need to take action. That's the way radio advertising works. And that's also the way you should buy it.

Most of the time, radio advertising should be bought in chunks. High frequency over a short period of time is much more effective than low frequency over a longer period of time. By advertising in concentrated areas in tight day groups, you seem larger than you really are. And people hearing your concentrated campaign for two or three days will think you're on all the time. The radio sales reps may try to sell you three spots everyday on the station for 14 days (a total of 42 spots). But your campaign won't be nearly as effective.

Here are a few tips to help you plan your commercials:

- If you're including your address in the commercial, simplify it. Instead of "134525 East Pines," say "at the corner of First & Pines, next to Gumbies." It's easier to remember.
- Don't use phone numbers in your commercial. If you have to mention your phone number, refer to the Yellow Pages in the local phone book.
- Radio works better when you combine it with other advertising media.
- Check out the price differences between 60-second and 30-second commercials.
- Normally, 30-second commercials are only 1/3 less than 60, which makes a 60-second commercial a better buy.

- Be creative with your radio advertising. If it sounds like all the rest of the commercials, it won't stand out. Make sure your scripts are well written in a friendly, conversational style. Avoid using buzz words or jargon. Repeat your important points, and make your ending strong and positive with call-to-action for response.

Television Advertising

Television is often called "king" of the advertising media, since a majority of people spend more hours watching TV per day than any other medium. It combines the use of sight, color, sound and motion...and it works. TV has proven its persuasive power in influencing human behavior time and time again.

But it's also the "king" of advertising costs.

Some advantages of television advertising include:

=> Advertising on television can give a product or service instant validity and prominence.

=> You can easily reach the audiences you have targeted by advertising on certain shows at certain times of day.

=> TV offers the greatest possibility for creative advertising. With a camera, you can take your audience anywhere and show them almost anything.

=> Since there are fewer television stations than radio stations in a given area, each TV audience is divided into much larger segments, which enables you to reach a larger, yet, more diverse audience.

Some disadvantages of television advertising are:

=> Because TV has such a large audience or A.D.I. (Area of Dominant Influence), the stations can charge more for commercials based on the larger number of viewers reached.

The cost of television commercial time is based on two variables:

1. The number of viewers who watch the program.
2. The time during the day the program airs.

One 30 second television commercial during prime time viewing (8 p.m. to 11 p.m.) can cost 10 to 30 times more than one radio spot during drive time (which is considered prime listening time).

While the newspaper may cover the city's general metropolitan area, TV may cover a good portion of the state where you live. If such a coverage blankets most of your sales territory, TV advertising may be the best advertising alternative for your business. However...

Don't Use TV Unless Your Advertising Budget Allows You to use it Optimally!

Attempting to use TV advertising by using a poorly-produced commercial; buying inexpensive late night - early morning commercial time that few people watch; or just placing your commercial a couple times on the air will guarantee disappointing results.

To obtain positive results from TV advertising you must have enough money in your budget to:

1. Pay for the cost of producing a good, creative TV commercial.
2. Pay for effective commercial time that will reach your viewer at least 5-7 times.

On the whole, television audiences have become more sophisticated and have come to expect quality commercials. A poorly produced commercial could severely limit the effectiveness of your message, and may even create a bad image in your customer's mind.

Advertising agencies or TV commercial production facilities are the best organizations for creating a commercial that will be effective for the goods or service you are offering. But the cost of a well-produced commercial is often prohibitively expensive for most small business entrepreneurs. You may however, be able to use a station's commercial production facilities for creating "tag lines" on pre-produced commercials. Often, the station will help you personalize the spot for little or no cost... if you advertise with them.

Bear in mind, when it comes to making a TV commercial, you get what you pay for. And when you're buying commercial time, it makes sense to have the best sales presentation possible. Like radio, the message comes and goes... and that's it. The viewer doesn't see your commercial again unless you buy more placements.

Bear in mind also that when you advertise on TV, your commercial is not only competing with other commercials, it's also competing with the other elements in the viewer's environment as well. The viewer may opt to get a snack or go to the bathroom during the commercial break, so there is no guarantee that just because your commercial is being aired it is being seen. To keep viewers in their seats it must be creative enough to capture and hold their attention.

Properly done, television advertising is the most effective medium there is. But it is *big league* advertising... and you shouldn't attempt it unless you have enough money in your budget to do it right.

If you're still attracted to TV, it's a good idea to call in an advertising agency for production and media buying estimates. Then, figure out what sales results you can expect before going ahead and taking the plunge.

A lower cost alternative to broadcast advertising you might want to consider is Cable TV advertising. It offers many of the same advantages as regular TV advertising. In fact, it may be even easier to target and reach a designated audience since it offers more programming.

The trouble with cable is that it doesn't reach everyone in the market area, since the signal has to be wired instead of broadcast and because not everyone subscribes to cable.

If cable does reach a large part of your market, have an advertising agency investigate its cost or call the cable company's advertising sales department. Chances are the commercial time will be 10 to 20 percent of the costs of regular broadcast time.

Direct "Snail" Mail

What makes "direct" mail different than regular mail? Nothing. It's just a way the advertising world describes a promotional message that circumvents traditional media (newspaper, radio, TV) and appeals directly to an individual consumer.

Direct mail is used more than you think. Studies indicate that it is the third largest media expenditure behind television and newspaper.

Direct Mail is not cheap. Postage can add up quickly, especially at today's rates, so if you're going to spend the money you want to be sure you aren't wasting it.

=> *Define your audience.* Figure out who you want to reach before developing your direct mail program. This allows you to specifically target your message to fit common needs. It is the best advertising medium for "tailoring" your appeal.

=> *Locate the right mailing list.* You can either build a "house list" by doing the research yourself and compiling the information on your computer - or you can purchase an "outside list" from a list house or mailing organization that will send you pre-prepared mailing labels already to go. To locate mailing list services, simply type "mailing list services" into your favorite search engine and you will be greeted by an immense selection.

There are many ways to purchase lists. You can buy them demographically (by age, profession, habits or business) or geographically (by location, or zip code). Or you can purchase a list with both qualities.

For assembling, addressing and mailing your campaign, you also have the choice of doing it yourself or locating a mailing service company to do it for you. As the numbers of your direct mail pieces increase, the more practical it is for you to enlist such an organization for assistance. They also are very good at getting you the lowest postal rates. A few good online resources for offline direct mailings include:

- [The National Mail Order Association](#) Bills itself as the "HUB" of Direct Response Marketing and offers a host of business information and contacts for mail order marketing, catalog marketing, database marketing, direct mail marketing or lead generation.
- [CyberDirect](#) Bills itself as the direct marketing community's first stop on the internet and offers mailing lists, fulfillment, computer services, printing and many other mail services.

If you're going to use direct mail, an inexpensive way to start is to use 4 X 6 postcards, which can be mailed via first-class postage for just 20 cents each. As your products and services grow in number, you can move up to two-sided sell sheets or even small catalogs.

Be sure to mention in your copy that your mail is being sent only to preferred customers of your web site - this will ensure a larger readership. Consider using a self-addressed reply card or envelope to strengthen return. Use a Business Reply Postage Number on the envelope and you'll only pay for the cards which are sent back to you.

The blessing (or curse) of direct mail is that there are no set rules for form or content. The task of deciding what to include in your message is up to you. However, remember to attract the reader's attention with color and creativity. Use clear, comfortable writing and make your appeal easy to respond to. And, of course, coordinate the mailing with other advertising media if you are also using them in the same campaign. It can significantly increase the potential return.

You might want to use what marketer Jim Daniel's refers to as the "One-Two Punch." Once you have an opt-in database of substantial size (and assuming you have gotten your prospect's regular mail addresses, along with their email addresses), you might consider using regular mail to introduce new or "up-sell" products or services you have to offer. Even if you only send a few hundred pieces, the results may surprise you. Sales percentages from previous customers can run as high as 25% or more - and the profits will more than balance out the expense.

If you can transform your direct mail marketing campaign into a sequence of messages, you will likely see a substantial improvement over single mailings. The power of such a process lies in the fact that subsequent mailings tend to make the offer more valuable. When an offer is repeated, people have the natural tendency to assume that the offer is important and not a fly-by-night spiel - or deal. Repetition not only helps to emphasize the importance of an offer but also aids in its comprehension and reinforces its urgency.

Yellow Pages

Telephone book advertising is another way to reach your market area. It allows you to place your business listing or ad in selected classifications within the book, with the theory being that when people need your product or service, they look up the classification and contact you.

Much of the "sell" copy for a product or service, therefore, does not have to be in your ad content, since the people who have looked up your classification are already in the market to buy. The thing to be aware of when you write the ad is the other firms' ads within your classification. In other words, why should the reader select your firm over your competition? That is the crucial question -- and your ad should provide the answer.

Advantages of Yellow Pages advertising:

- => One ad works all year long.
- => It gives your prospect a method of easily locating and contacting your business, even if they didn't initially know your name.
- => It can help you to point out the differences between you and your competition.
- => You pay by the month instead of one large payment.

Disadvantages of Yellow Pages advertising:

- => You must commit to an entire year of advertising.
- => You are immediately placed with a group of your competitors, making it easy for a prospect to comparison shop - and possibly pass you by.
- => Some classifications are so cluttered with advertising, your ad is buried and ineffective.
- => It is only effective when a prospect looks you up in the correct classification, assuming the prospect knows what classification to look for in the first place.

(If you require more than one classification, your Yellow Pages representative often has packages and programs that can save you some money. The same is often true if you need to be advertising in more than one city or market.)

Some factors to consider in designing your Yellow Pages ads are:

1. Your ad should be large enough to incorporate the vital information the reader needs to make a contact decision.

2. Keep your ad clean, creative and eye-appealing. Even though the phone company will "design your ad for free," some firms employ graphic artists and advertising agencies to create a Yellow Pages ad that really stands out.
3. Give yourself a budget to work with. Figure out how much you want to spend on Yellow Pages advertising for the entire year, then divide it by 12. That will give you the payment that is automatically attached to your phone bill every month.
4. Do something unique or different. If no one else is using color, use color. Even shades of gray can make an ad look better and more appealing.

Yellow Pages advertising is an important medium to consider in our fast-paced, information-hungry society. People really do let their "fingers do the walking" instead of driving around blindly.

Make sure your Yellow Pages ad is attractive and informative enough to be the one or two businesses the prospect actually does select to call. And then make sure you have the resources to deal with the inquiry. After all, there is nothing more annoying than being put "on-hold" by a busy checker or being served by an uninterested or unknowledgeable employee.

Outdoor Advertising

When people think of outdoor advertising, they usually think of the colorful billboards along our streets and highways. Included in the "outdoor" classification, however, are benches, posters, signs and transit advertising (the advertising on buses, subways, taxicabs and trains). They all share similar advertising rules and methods.

Outdoor advertising reaches its audience as an element of the environment. Unlike newspaper, radio or TV, it doesn't have to be invited into the home. And it doesn't provide entertainment to sustain its audience.

Some advantages of outdoor advertising:

=> Since it is in the public domain, outdoor advertising assuredly reaches its audience. People can't "switch it off" or "throw it out." People are exposed to it whether they like it or not. In this sense, outdoor advertising truly has a "captured audience."

=> It's messages work on the advertising principle of "frequency." Since most messages stay in the same place for a period of a month or more, people who drive by or walk past see the same message a number of times.

=> Outdoor advertising is an excellent adjunct to other types of advertising you are doing. In fact, it is most effective when coupled with other media.

Some disadvantages of outdoor advertising:

=> Outdoor advertising is a glance medium. At best, it only draws 2-3 seconds of a reader's time.

=> Messages must be brief to fit in that 2-3 second time frame. Ninety-five percent of the time, either the message or the audience is in motion.

When you buy outdoor advertising, remember that location is everything. High traffic areas are ideal. A billboard or poster in an unfrequented area will do you little good.

Keep your message concise (use only five to seven words) and make it creatively appealing to attract readership. Few words, large illustrations (or photos), bold colors and simple backgrounds will create the most effective outdoor advertising messages.

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